



File Code: 2600

Date: September 15, 2021

Dear Interested Party,

The Forest Service is proposing to authorize the construction of a wildlife dirt tank in Valencia Canyon. We are asking whether you may have any issues or concerns regarding the proposed action (described in detail below). Based on a preliminary assessment, we intend to categorically exclude the proposed project from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment using Category 36 CFR 220.6 (e)(6) "Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities that do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than 1 mile of low standard road construction".

Purpose and Need for the Project

The purpose and need for the proposed action is to provide an alternate water source for wildlife in the Valencia Canyon region. Due to climate change and continuing drought water is a resource that is becoming a rare commodity. The location of this tank will help increase the canyon's ability to capture and store water for wildlife and help slow erosion in the watershed.

Proposed Action

The proposed action consists of the following (all acreages provided are approximate):

Valencia Tank Construction (Figure 1):

The proposed Valencia tank location would be .75 acres in size, with a 2.8 acre construction zone around the tank. Dirt from the proposed tank location would be used as fill material to level low spots to help prevent future wash outs and control erosion.

The tank will be completed in dry conditions to reduce impacts utilizing mechanized equipment such as but not limited to excavators, bobcats, and bulldozers. The project will include digging and contouring the tank to ensure access and escape for wildlife. Access to the tank will be parallel to the wash on the south side.

Project Location

The project will take place in Township 28 N, Section 4 W, Range 11 off of Forest Road 314 in Rio Arriba County, New Mexico and is part of the Ciruelas Canyon-Arroyo Companero watershed.

An overview of the project area is depicted in **Figure 2**.

How to Comment

Comments must be submitted to Richard Rymerson, District Ranger, Jicarilla Ranger District. Comments may be submitted by mail and or hand delivered to:

Valencia Tank Project



C/O Wildlife Biologist
1110 Rio Vista Lane, Unit #2,
Bloomfield, NM 87413

Hand delivered comments would be accepted on weekdays between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm by appointment only.

Comments can also be submitted electronically to: comments-southwestern-carson-jicarilla@usda.gov.

Comments must be in: Adobe (.pdf), MS-Word (.doc or .docx), rich text format (.rtf), text (.txt), or hypertext markup language (.html). Please include "Valencia Tank." in the subject line.

It is important that comments are provided at such times and in such a manner that comments are provided at such times and in a such a manner that they are useful to the agency's preparation of the environmental analysis. Therefore, comments should be provided prior to the close of the scoping period **(14 days from the date of the letter)** and should clearly articulate the commenter's concerns and contentions or support.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including name and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not receive subsequent project information.

Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied; the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within 7 days.

Questions?

If you have questions or would like to further discuss the project, please contact Willis Sylvest, Jicarilla Ranger District Wildlife Biologist, at (505) 632-2956.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Richard A. Rymerson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

RICHARD RYMERSON

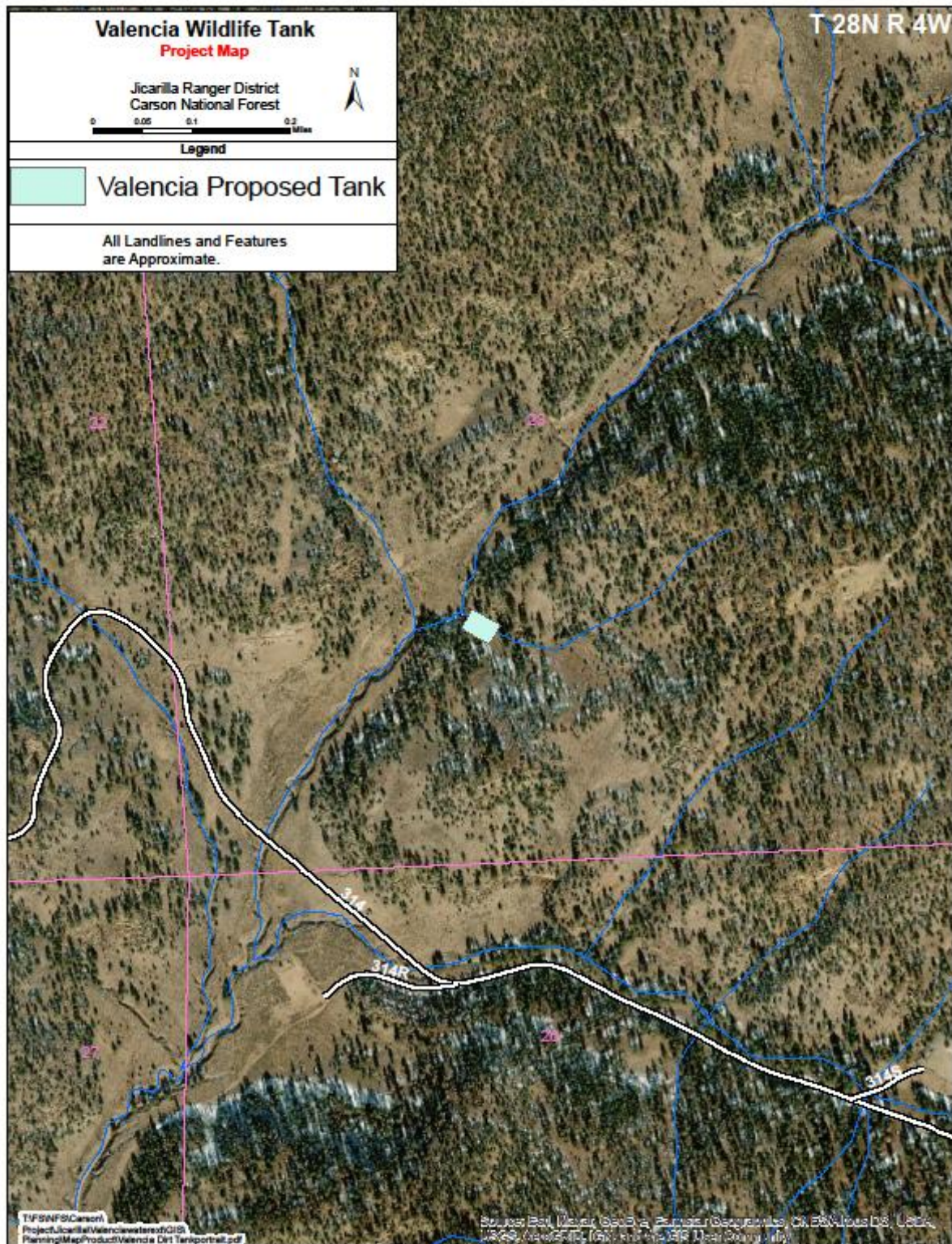


Figure 1

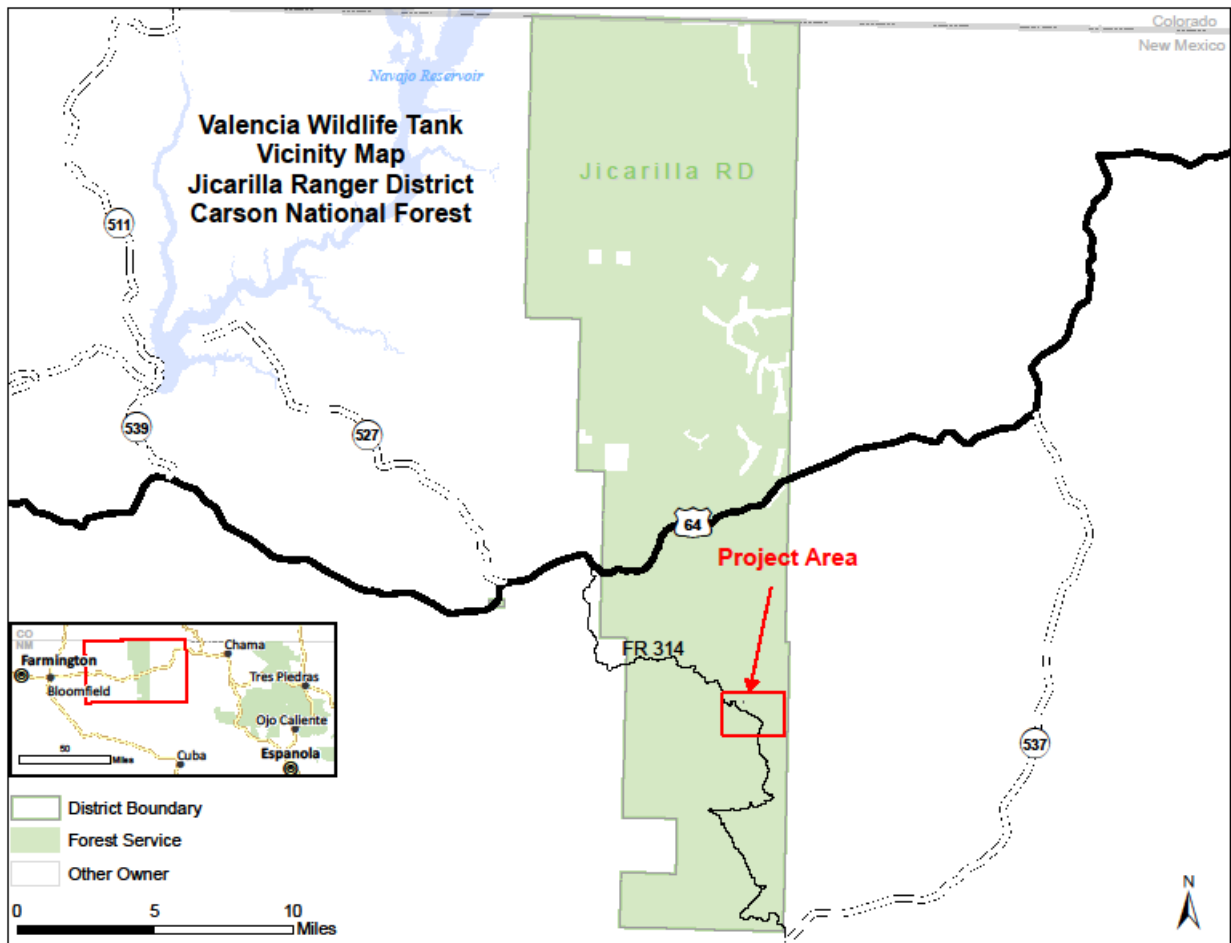


Figure 2